

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE CHRIST,

BASED ON LUKE.

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Introductory Statements.—1. The series of "Studies" of which this is the first, will include forty-eight, all treating of the Life of the Christ, based on the Book of Luke.

2. The plan herewith presented does not aim to present results, but to suggest an order of work which will secure results.

3. It is not intended for professional scholars, but for students of any class who desire to study.

Helps.—1. Any good commentary will be found serviceable. The following books are particularly recommended as helpful and inexpensive:

(1) *Cambridge Bible for Schools*, St. Luke, by F. W. Farrar, D. D., Macmillan & Co. (N. Y.), \$1.10 (abbreviated, *Farrar*); (2) *Handbooks for Bible Classes*, St. Luke, by T. M. Lindsay, D. D., 2 vols., Scribner & Welford (N. Y.), \$1.50 (abbreviated, *Lindsay*); (3) *The Handy Commentary*, St. Luke, by E. H. Plumptre, D. D., Cassell & Co. (N. Y.), \$1.00.

2. References will be made from time to time in these "studies" to the following works; (1) Van Oosterzee on *Luke* in the Lange series (abbreviated, *Van O.*); (2) the Pulpit Commentary, *St. Luke*, 2 vols. (*Pulp. Com.*); (3) Godet, on *Luke*, 2 vols. (*Godet*); (4) Westcott, *Introduction to the Gospels* (*Westc.*); (5) Stapfer, *Palestine in the Time of Christ* (*Stapf.*). References to other works will be made in full.

3. A "Life of Jesus Christ" while not indispensable will afford much assistance in the "studies." *The Life of Christ*, by Rev. J. Stalker, Scribner & Welford, 60 cts., is unsurpassed in real value by many larger works. The books of Farrar, Geikie, Edersheim, Vallings, and Ellicott are helpful. *The Life of Christ*, by Dr. B. Weiss, Scribner & Welford (N. Y.), 3 vols., \$9.00, is the latest and ablest work of German scholarship. It is a book for critical students.

4. A good Bible Dictionary will aid wonderfully in this work. The American Sunday School Union's (Schaff's) Dictionary of the Bible, \$2.00, is recommended. Smith's Bible Dictionary is the standard work. It is published in its unabridged form by Houghton, Mifflin & Co. (Boston), 4 vols., \$20.00. There are numerous abridgments.

5. These "helps" must be rigidly held subordinate to the study and investigation of the text itself. The primary aim of these "studies" is to lead the student to do his own work.

6. It is understood that these "studies" are prepared on the basis of the *Revised Version* of the New Testament. The student will not permit himself to be without it even if he has no other help. It is better than any commentary.

Different Grades.—Four different grades of each "study" are published; the first or *elementary* grade, arranged for those who have made least progress in biblical study; the second or *intermediate* for those who are somewhat older; the third or *progressive* for those who are still older and have gained some experience in work of this kind; the fourth or *advanced*, for those who have time and are able to do work of still higher character. Only the *advanced grade* is published in the STUDENT (four studies in each monthly issue for 1890).* The other grades are issued separately in pamphlet form.†

STUDIES I AND II.—THE PRELUDE. LUKE 1: 1-56.

Remark.—It is desirable that in beginning each "study" the entire passage assigned be read over rapidly and the main divisions of the narrative noted.

* The January number contains eight "studies," in order that ample material for study may be in the student's hands from the first.

† For full particulars, address The Student Publishing Co., 28 Cooper Union, New York City.

I. EXAMINATION OF THE MATERIAL.

[It will be noted that the following order is observed invariably in this work : (1) the verse or section is read and its contents stated in a general way ; (2) important or difficult words and phrases are studied ; (3) a complete statement of the contents of the verse or section is formed in view of the work already done ; (4) the religious teaching is sought.]

§ 1. Chapter 1 : 1-4.

1. Look over these verses and note their subject. Is it not *Origin, character and purpose of the Book*?
2. Of words and phrases the following require study :* (1) *have-taken-in-hand* (v. 1), (a) the same Gk. word in Acts 9 : 29 ("went-about") ; 19 : 13 ("took upon") ; (b) in view of the context in this and the other passages does this word suggest more or less failure in the undertaking ? (2) *those matters*, etc., i. e., the life of Jesus ; (3) *delivered* (v. 2), (a) chiefly by word of mouth, (b) same word in Mk. 7 : 3 ; Acts 6 : 14 ; 1 Cor. 11 : 2, 23 ; (4) *which*, refers to "they" not to "us" ; (5) *eyewitnesses and ministers*, i. e., apostles chiefly ; (6) *traced-the-course-of* (v. 3), lit. "followed-alongside-of," note the figure ; (7) *in order*, either (a) order of time, or (b) of logical and spiritual relation—to be decided by further study of the book ; (8) *most-excellent*, probably an official title, cf. Acts 23 : 26 ; 26 : 25 ; (9) *know*, i. e., fully and clearly ; (10) *wast-instructed*, more fully "didst-receive-oral-teaching."
3. Is it not sufficient as a statement of the contents of this section to say, *Since many accounts of the life of Jesus had been prepared on the basis of what the apostles told us, I concluded to investigate all things and to write an orderly narrative, noble Theophilus, that you might be sure of what you had been taught.*
4. In view of the facts (1) that Luke put forth such effort to make clear and certain the facts of Jesus' life, (2) since he saw that faith depends on the certainty of them—(3) consider the obligation resting upon us to know the facts and to attain this certainty.†

§ 2. Chapter 1 : 5-7.

1. Read and note the subject : *The life and character of Zacharias and his wife.*
2. Words and phrases calling for examination are, (1) *Herod*‡ (v. 5), (a) date, (b) history, (c) character ; (2) *course of Abijah* (a) cf. 1 Chr. 23 : 6 ; 24 : 1, 10, (b) the use made of this in the chronology of Jesus' life ; § (3) *had no child* (v. 7), regarded as a misfortune. Why?
3. Study the following condensation of the section ; *In Herod's reign there lived a priest, Z., and his wife, E., righteous people but childless in their old age.*
4. Observe an upright and godly personal and family life maintained in spite of the withholding of ardently desired blessings.

§ 3. Chapter 1 : 8-25.

1. This passage relates to *The angel's announcement to Zacharias, and its results.*
2. (1) *It came to pass* (v. 8), an O. T. phrase, one of many similar Hebraic phrases in this chapter ; (2) *thy supplication* (v. 13), (a) for a son ; how reconcile with the

* Besides the material in the commentaries, students will find a brief but helpful treatment in Westcott, pp. 196-198.

† A helpful presentation of these thoughts will be found in Alexander *Epistles of St. John* (Expositor's Library), pp. 45-48.

‡ See *Bible Dict.* art. Herod ; or Stapfer, pp. 68-70.

§ Cf. Farrar, p. 45.

unbelief of v. 18? or (b) for the promised Messiah (Christ)*; (3) *John*, its meaning? (4) "there shall be wide-spread joy as a result of his birth" (v. 14); how was this fulfilled? (5) *filled with the Holy Ghost* (v. 15), in the O. T. sense, endowment with the gifts required for service, cf. Ex. 31 : 3; Judg. 13 : 29; 1 Sam. 11 : 6; (6) *go before his face* (v. 17), i. e., be the Lord's herald; (7) *fathers to children* either (a) heal domestic troubles, or (b) recall the days of the patriarchs;* (8) *seen a vision* (v. 22), throws light on v. 11 "appeared;" (9) *reproach* (v. 25), in what it consisted?

3. The condensed statement of this passage may be arrived at as follows: (1) vs. 8-12, "While Z. burns incense in the temple the appearance to him of an angel terrifies him"; (2) vs. 13-17 "the angel says, You shall have a son named John who, endowed with spiritual power, shall be the herald of the Lord and prepare the people for him;" (3) vs. 18-25, "Z. asks for a sign and is made dumb by the angel until the word is fulfilled. On his return home Elizabeth conceives and hides herself." Summing up these several statements: *An angel appears to Z. in the midst of his priestly service and announces that a son shall be born to him named John who shall be the herald of the coming Lord. Z. is made dumb for doubting it. He returns home and the announcement begins to be fulfilled.*
4. May not the religious teaching be found in the fact that one who is to do a mighty spiritual work for God (1) is given somehow in answer to prayer; (2) to one least expecting him; (3) must himself practice self-denial and (4) must be filled with the Holy Ghost. Such a man is great in the sight of the Lord.

§ 4. Chapter 1 : 26-38.

1. Does not your reading of these verses determine that they relate how *The angel announces to Mary that she shall bear Jesus*?
2. (1) *A virgin betrothed* (v. 27); learn something of the significance of betrothal among the Jews;† (2) *highly favored* (v. 28), etc.; what light on the character of M.? (3) *troubled*; why? (4) *Jesus* (v. 31), meaning (Mt. 1 : 21)? (5) Were vs. 32 a, 33, fulfilled? Why not? (5) *handmaid*, what light on Mary's character?
3. The contents of these verses may be given thus: *The angel visits and salutes a betrothed virgin named Mary announcing, "You shall have a son Jesus, son and successor of David, son of God, since the Holy Ghost shall come upon you. Elizabeth, too, is to bear a son, according to God's promise." Mary accepts submissively the message of the angel.*
4. Observe the devout humility and obedience of one who is called to do and be that, which, though inexpressibly exalting, is associated with much that is incredible and humiliating.

§ 5. Chapter 1 : 39-45.

1. Read this section and decide whether the subject of this section is *Mary's visit to Elizabeth*.
2. (1) *Went in haste* (v. 39); what reason for this journey? (2) *hill-country*, where? (3) *she that believed* (v. 45); further light on Mary's character.

* Cf. Pulp. Com. note.

† Cf. *Bib. Dict.*, arts. Betrothal, marriage; Bissell, *Biblical Antiquities*, pp. 44-46.

3. Note the following permanent statement: *Mary hastens to Elizabeth who, as she enters, is led to salute her as the mother of the Lord and blesses her faith with assurance of fulfillment.*
4. Is not your attention here directed to the need of sympathy and the helpfulness of it?

§ 6. Chapter 1: 46-56.

1. May this be called *Mary's Hymn*?
2. (1) Notice that vs. 46 and 47 state the same thought in different forms. This is a characteristic of Hebrew poetry called "parallelism;" find other examples in the hymn; (2) compare the language with that of the O. T., i. e. (a) with Hannah's song, 1 Sam. 2: 1-10; (b) with Ps. 35: 9; 111: 9; 103: 17; 98: 1; Isa. 31: 8; Mic. 7: 20; (3) *all generations*, etc.; light on Mary's faith. (4) in v. 52 note that the two lines express opposite thoughts; this is called *antithetic* parallelism, so v. 53; (5) study the statements of vs. 51-53 and inquire their meaning in the circumstances; e. g., (a) this is God's ordinary action in the world, or (b) he will do this through the birth and life of the Christ.
3. The contents of the hymn are worthy of special study; observe four strophes,* (1) vs. 46, 47, *my whole being rejoices in God, my saviour*; (2) vs. 48-50 [*my saviour*] *because he exalted me so that coming generations shall call me blessed, therein displaying his might, his holiness and his mercy*; (3) vs. 50-53, *his mercy extends to all his servants, manifested in the power by which he abases the haughty and lifts up the lowly*, (4) *this mercy to his people being in fulfillment of promise.*
4. Does not this hymn illustrate God's mercy toward them that fear him (1) in lifting them up, (2) in protecting them, (3) in fulfilling his promises on their behalf.

II. CLASSIFICATION OF THE MATERIAL.

1. The Contents and Summary.

- 1) **The Contents.** The following table of the sections of the material is to be read, studied and reviewed until it is thoroughly mastered.

THE PRELUDE.

- § 1. ORIGIN, CHARACTER, AND PURPOSE OF THE BOOK.
- § 2. LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ZACHARIAS AND HIS WIFE.
- § 3. THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE TO ZACHARIAS AND ITS RESULT.
- § 4. THE ANGEL'S MESSAGE TO MARY.
- § 5. MARY'S VISIT TO ELIZABETH.
- § 6. MARY'S HYMN.

- 2) **The Summary.** Setting aside vs. 1-4 which is an introduction, gather under this the various *statements of the contents* into a general view of the thought of the whole passage, e. g. *In the reign of Herod an angel announces (1) to the old priest Zacharias that his wife Elizabeth shall bear him a son who is to be the herald of the Lord; (2) afterwards to Mary, a betrothed virgin, that the Holy Ghost shall come upon her and she shall bear Jesus the Christ of God. Meekly receiving this message she hastens to Elizabeth who greets her as the mother of the Lord, whereupon Mary sings of God's mercy in exalting her as well as all lowly ones, putting down the haughty, and fulfilling his promises to Israel.*

* Lindsay I, pp. 50, 51 (notes), gives an excellent analysis.

2. Observations on the Material.

The following statements of facts or conclusions which are of importance in connection with the passage are to be read carefully and considered.

- 30) The chronological material given here has much to do with settling the date of the baptism of Jesus.*
- 31) 3 : 6. Luke emphasizes the universal element in the Gospel life and thought, cf. 2 : 14, 32.
- 32) 3 : 7-14. In the religious world, formalism and spiritual pride were manifest; in social life men were characterized by selfishness, greed and violence.†
- 33) That such people should come to John meant a great moral awakening in the nation.
- 34) 3 : 2, 3, 7-9. John in his call, his work and his preaching is a prophet.
- 35) His preaching was severely practical, and yet he proclaimed the Christ.‡
- 36) Some of this material (vs. 10-14) shows that Luke had other sources of knowledge than Mt. or Mk.
- 37) Luke passes over the baptism of Jesus and emphasizes the communication of the Spirit to him.
- 38) That Jesus prayed is an evidence that he felt the need of prayer.
- 39) 3 : 21. It was while Jesus was praying that the Spirit came upon him.§
- 40) 3 : 22. The Father was "well pleased in" his Son before this occasion.||
- 41) However the "dove" may be regarded, it is plain that the Spirit came upon Jesus to remain with him.¶
- 42) Since he possessed that Spirit from the beginning this event must have had a different meaning for him.**

3. Topics for Study.

Observe the topical arrangement of the observations for further study :

- 1) **The Work of John.** [Obs. 32-35]: (1) Note the two *elements* in his work (a) preaching, (b) baptizing; consider their relation. (2) Enumerate some *characteristics* of his ministry, e. g. (a) a call for moral reformation, (b) a messianic proclamation; consider the relation of these two, cf. Mt. 3 : 7-12. (3) Estimate the *results* of his ministry, (a) in a great popular reforma-

* "We rest, then, in the conclusion, that Jesus was baptized December, 779 (A.D. 26), or January, 780 (A.D. 27)" Andrews, *Essay on the Date of the Lord's Baptism*, in *Life of Our Lord*, pp. 22-35. † We prefer to think of Jesus journeying toward the Jordan in the early days of the year 28 A.D." Weiss, *Life of Christ*, I., p. 318. Cf. Lindsay, I., p. 64.

‡ "Such were the pitiable features of society—a nation en-slaved; the upper classes devoting themselves to selfishness, courtiership and scepticism; the teachers and chief professors of religion lost in mere shows of ceremonialism, and boasting themselves the favorites of God, while their souls were honey-combed with self-deception and vice; the body of the people misled by false ideals; and seething at the bottom of society, a neglected mass of unblushing and unrestrained sin." Stalker, § 36.

§ For a characterization of his preaching cf. Farrar, *Luke*, pp. 86, 87.

¶ "Is it not intimated that he was looking for some recognition of his messiahship to be given, and that he earnestly besought this now?" Bliss, *Commentary on Luke*, p. 69.

|| "It may be said, that if we allow the verb to refer us to the past, we do not know to what point to go back . . . Perhaps the divine thought is: 'In the adoption of that plan of human redemption of which thou wast to be the Mediator and Finisher, I was well pleased with thee.'" Bliss, p. 70.

¶ "While he was praying and gazing up into heaven the deep blue vault was rent asunder, and the sinless one gazed far into the realms of eternal light; and as he gazed he saw descend a ray of glory, which, dove-like, brooded above his head and then lighted upon him. . . . That the form of a *dove* absolutely descended and lighted on Jesus seems unlikely; a radiant, glorious *Something*. . . . John compares it to a dove—this cloud of glory sailing through the clear heaven, then, bird-like, sinking, hovering, brooding over, then lighting upon him." Pulp. Com., I., p. 69. *Per contra*, Schaff in Van O. "The quiet flight and resting dove betokened no rushing torrent of inspiration . . . but a uniform unfolding of the life of God, the loftiness, yet the calm repose of a nature itself Divine." Neander, *Life of Christ*, p. 67.

** "The vision and the voice contained a subjective revelation of the Holy Spirit, intended exclusively for the Baptist . . . (Jesus) needed no such revelation." Neander, *Life of Ch.*, p. 68. This was neither a meaningless symbol nor merely a signal to the Baptist. It was the symbol of a special gift then given to qualify Him for His work." Stalker, § 49. "From this time Jesus was to be under the constant operation of the Spirit, which enabled him to say and to do what was needful to his Messianic calling." Weiss, I., p. 327.

4. Religious Teaching.

Let all *the religious teachings* of the sections be gathered up into the one great lesson of the passage. Does it not have to do with the *Proclamation of a Deliverer and Preparation for him*, (a) all originating in a *divine impulse*, (b) all according to *divine promise*, (c) all finding its earthly beginning among devoted servants of God, (d) the deliverer himself to be preceded by a human herald, and (e) though the Son of God, also the son of Mary.

STUDIES III AND IV.—BIRTH AND BOYHOOD OF JOHN AND JESUS. LUKE 1 : 57—2 : 52.

Remark: It is desirable that in beginning each "study" (1) the material of the preceding "study" be reviewed, and (2) the entire passage assigned be read over rapidly and the main divisions of the narrative noted.

I. EXAMINATION OF THE MATERIAL.

[It will be noted that the following order is observed invariably in this work : 1) the verse or section is read and its contents stated in a general way ; (2) important or difficult words and phrases are studied ; (3) a complete statement of the contents of the verse or section is formed in view of the work already done ; (4) the religious teaching is sought.]

§ 1. Chapter 1 : 57-66.

1. Read and note the subject : *Birth of John and events attending it.*
2. The following words and phrases may be studied with the helps available : (1) *Eighth day*, v. 59, cf. Gen. 17 : 12 ; (2) *would-have-called*, lit. "were calling," i. e. "wanted to call"; (3) *made-signs* (v. 62), was Z. deaf also? (4) *writing-tablet* (v. 63), see Comm. or Bib. Dict. for description ; (5) *marvelled*, was it in view of both mother and father agreeing *independently* on this name? (6) *noised-abroad* (v. 65), so that Luke may have learned thus these facts ; (7) *hand of the Lord*, etc., an O. T. phrase, cf. Judg. 2 : 15 ; Ezra 7 : 9.
3. Study the following condensation of this section : *The child of E. is born amid rejoicing, circumcised, named John by mother and father. The father at once recovers speech and praises God. These things move all who hear of them to wonder, fear and consider the future.*
4. Observe how much greater likelihood of the growth of a child in righteousness, when, as in this case, in the giving of his name, in the life and the belief of his parents and in the universal expectation, the atmosphere of godly influences is thrown about him from the beginning.

§ 2. Chapter 1 : 67-79.

1. Look over these verses and note the subject. Is it not *The hymn of Zacharias*?
2. (1) *prophesied* (v. 67), (a) note the revival of prophecy, (b) in what sense this is called prophecy (cf. *Van O.*, note on v. 67) ; (2) *hath-wrought-redemption* (v. 68), (a) lit. "wrought red," though still in the future, regarded as past, (b) "redemption" equals "deliverance," (c) is it from national oppressors or national sins? (3) *horn of salv.* (v. 69), cf. Ps. 18 : 2 ; 92 : 10 ; (4) v. 74, first political freedom, then righteousness ; (5) *remission of sins* (v. 77), i. e. when their sins are remitted the nation will know that deliverance is at hand, Mk. 1 : 4, (cf. *Pulp. Comm.*, note on v. 72) ; (6) *the dayspring* (v. 78) see the explanation of the figure in *Lindsay*, note on v. 78.